I. Amendments To The Claims

1. - 61. (previously canceled)

62. (currently amended) An isolated ~~polypeptide~~ **fusion protein of IFNAR2** comprising **(1)** the sequence of SEQ ID NO: 2 **and (2) a human immunoglobulin-constant domain**, wherein the affinity of said ~~polypeptide~~ **fusion protein** for IFN-β is synergistically increased **at least 25 to 100-fold** compared to wild type human IFNAR2.

63.-65. (previously canceled)

66. (canceled)

67. (currently amended) The ~~polypeptide~~ **fusion protein** of claim 62, wherein the affinity to IFN-β is at least 30 pM.

68. (currently amended) The ~~polypeptide~~ **fusion protein** of claim 62, wherein the affinity to IFN-β is at least ~~25 to 100 fold~~ **50-fold** higher than the affinity of the wild type polypeptide.

69. (canceled)

70. (currently amended) The ~~polypeptide~~ **fusion protein** of claim 62, wherein the ~~polypeptide~~ **fusion protein** is covalently bound to IFN.

71. (currently amended) The ~~polypeptide~~ **fusion protein** of claim 70, wherein the IFN is IFN-β.

72. (previously canceled)

73. (previously canceled)

74. (previously canceled)

75. (canceled)

76. (currently amended) A DNA encoding the ~~polypeptide~~ **fusion protein** of claim 62.

77. (currently amended) The DNA of claim 75, wherein the ~~polypeptide~~ **fusion protein further** comprises a signal peptide sequence.

78. (previously presented) The DNA of claim 76, wherein the signal peptide sequence is that of human growth hormone.

79. (previously presented) A vector comprising the DNA according to any one of claims 75-77, wherein the vector is capable of expressing the polypeptide in a prokaryotic host cell or eukaryotic host cell.

80. (previously presented) A host cell comprising the vector of claim 78.

81. (currently amended) A method of producing an IFNAR2 mutant ~~polypeptide~~ **fusion protein** comprising:

(a) cultivating the cell of claim 79 under conditions that cause the expression of the ~~polypeptide~~ **fusion protein**; and

(b) isolating the ~~polypeptide~~ **fusion protein**.

82. (currently amended) A composition comprising the ~~polypeptide~~ **fusion protein** of claim 62.

83. (previously canceled).

84. (previously canceled)

85. (previously canceled).

86. (previously canceled).

87. (withdrawn) The composition of claim 82, further comprising IFNβ.

88. (previously presented) A method of augmenting the anti-cancer, immune modulating or anti-viral properties of IFNβ comprising administering to a patient in need thereof a therapeutically effective amount of the composition of claim 82.

89. (previously presented) The method of claim 88, wherein the method is for augmenting the immune modulatory activities of IFNβ in an autoimmune disease selected from multiple sclerosis, rheumatoid arthritis, myasthenia gravis, diabetes, lupus and ulcerative colitis.

90. (withdrawn) The method of claim 88, wherein the method is for augmenting the anti-cancer activities of IFNβ in a disease selected from hairy cell leukemia, Kaposi's sarcoma, multiple myeloma, chronic myelogenous leukemia, non-Hodgkins's lymphoma and melanoma.

91. (withdrawn) The method of claim 88, wherein the method is for augmenting the anti-viral properties of IFNβ in a disease selected from chronic granulomatous disease, condyloma acuminatum, juvenile laryngeal papillomatosis, hepatitis A and chronic infection with hepatitis B and C viruses.

92. (withdrawn) The composition of claim 87, wherein said polypeptide of claim 62 and said IFNβ are covalently linked.

93. (previously presented) The composition of claim 82, further comprising an IFN antagonist.

94. (previously canceled).